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The Road Ahead – IV

A REPORT ON IMPROVING SCHOOLS THROUGH GREATER ACCOUNTABILITY



The fourth report of the
EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT COMMISSION
April 2000

Education
Improvement
Commission

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Letter of Transmittal

April 13, 2000

Dear Minister,

The Education Improvement Commission is pleased to present *The Road Ahead - IV: A Report on Improving Schools Through Greater Accountability*.

The Commission recently completed a progress review of Ontario's new district school boards. Our purpose in this report is to summarize our progress review and to provide direction for the road ahead, which we believe will lead to the ongoing improvement of boards.

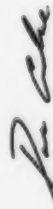
In three interim reports, we described the review process; reported on our general observations; identified trends in boards across the province; and made recommendations for the consideration of school boards, the Ministry of Education, and other partners in education.

This report contains 15 recommendations directed to school boards, to the Education Quality and Accountability Office, and to you and your ministry. The recommendations cover a range of topics, including:

- the need for accurate and relevant province-by-province information about student performance and education funding
- the need for the ministry to provide for an appropriate increase in the compensation levels of school board employees; and the need for boards and employee groups to recognize their responsibilities to ensure that the education system operates effectively, and that students have full access to instructional and extracurricular programs
- the development and implementation of a comprehensive accountability framework for the education system
- the empowerment of an independent agency to conduct ongoing reviews of school boards.

In the report, we outline a comprehensive accountability framework that would define "who does what." We believe such a framework would contribute greatly to the improvement of the education system and student achievement.

We commend this report to you and look forward to continuing to work with you.



Dave Cooke
Co-chair



Ann Vanstone
Co-chair



Peter Cameron
Commissioner



Rémi Lessard
Commissioner



Betty Moseley-Williams
Commissioner



Arlene Wright
Commissioner

1. Introduction

In this report, we outline the progress the Education Improvement Commission (EIC) saw in its recent review of Ontario's 72 new district school boards.

In our three previous *Road Ahead* reports, we used the analogy of a road map. We believe the analogy is appropriate for this report as well. Our progress review demonstrated that boards have made significant progress toward achieving a common vision of the restructured education system, though there are still some roadblocks to be overcome in the ongoing journey of improvement.

The EIC was established by the Ontario government in 1997 to oversee the transition to the province's new system of educational governance. The Commission's main responsibility is to ensure that Ontario's new district school boards are established in an organized and appropriate manner. In February 1999, the then Minister of Education and Training asked the EIC to undertake a systematic progress review of the new boards. We were pleased to accept this project, because we believed the review would encourage boards to build on the improvements that have already been made.

The Minister asked us to focus our review on:

- the major restructuring activities undertaken by boards to reduce their administrative and support structures
- innovative and cost-effective ways of delivering non-teaching services (including cooperatives, consortia, partnerships, and joint labour-management initiatives)
- forward-looking practices that have helped boards implement education reforms
- opportunities to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of board operations
- methods that boards use to communicate with their communities
- the role of school councils in boards' decision-making processes, and the feasibility of increasing parental involvement in educational governance.

We are pleased to report that each board in the province was reviewed in 1999. The EIC has published 72 individual reports, one on each board, as well as three interim reports on the review process. We have also completed an evaluation of the review process. The evaluation generated very positive comments from administration, trustees,

employees, parents, and other participants from across the province, as well as some suggestions for improvement.

While our progress review focused primarily on the restructuring of school boards, it was not possible to isolate restructuring from other aspects of education reform. Therefore, many of our observations and recommendations reflected the impact of other education reform initiatives that took place simultaneously with restructuring.

The objective of education reform must be to improve the quality of education for our students. Recent reforms in Ontario have focused on increasing student learning, creating greater equity among students, developing greater accountability, and ensuring more efficient use of resources. These reforms have included six initiatives:

- curriculum reform
- testing and reporting on student achievement
- funding reform
- the restructuring of school boards
- ongoing professional accreditation of teachers
- the development of a new role for principals.

Our purpose in this report is to summarize our progress review of Ontario's school boards and to provide direction for the road ahead, which we believe will lead to the ongoing improvement of boards. The review process has highlighted the significant progress boards are making in the face of unprecedented levels of change. While some storm clouds on the horizon signal issues that will need to be resolved, our review has affirmed the commitment of school boards to fulfilling their responsibilities to Ontario's students.

The Ministry of Education is accountable to the people of Ontario for standards in student achievement and for the effective and efficient use of public funds. It is responsible for articulating a vision of education for the province, and providing sufficient and equitable funding to school boards to achieve this vision. In turn, each school board is responsible for ensuring that it promotes a high level of student achievement.

Under the new system of educational governance, the Ministry of Education has assumed full responsibility for the funding of education. As a result, there has been a significant change in the relationship between the ministry and the new district school boards. School boards must now meet all the needs within their jurisdictions through the funding they receive from the ministry. These changes mean that the decisions made by the ministry, school boards, and schools will come under increasing scrutiny. A stronger accountability framework is needed.

to more clearly define the responsibilities and obligations of both the ministry and school boards.

In fact, in our view, no factor would contribute more to the improvement of our education system and of student achievement than the development and implementation of a comprehensive accountability framework that defines "who does what." In this report we outline such a framework, and provide recommendations for its implementation. We also describe some strategies that would encourage the continuing improvement of school boards.

Additionally, we present highlights of our evaluation of the review process, and note some of the exemplary practices that we discuss in more detail in our *Progress Review of Ontario's New District School Boards: Best of Effective Practices* (April 2000).

2. Key Areas of Success in Restructuring

Our review was designed to measure progress, through the use of checklists, surveys, and guided discussion, in the following six areas of school board operations:

- Finance, facilities, and transportation
- Communication and community relations
- Human resources
- Student support services
- Governance
- Board administration.

In addition, the review was intended to examine the role of school councils in boards' decision-making processes, and to study the feasibility of increasing parental involvement in educational governance.

In our opinion, the restructuring process has been successful but is still incomplete. We believe restructuring is a process that takes time. The education system has undergone major changes, and we believe a period of stability is needed to consolidate the gains that have been made.

We congratulate board trustees and staff, who have worked very hard to ensure that the administrative restructuring of school boards has been smooth. We saw significant progress in all the areas of board operations we reviewed. To help boards with their restructuring efforts, the highly effective practices we observed during our review are being published separately in the document *Best of Effective Practices*. The progress that boards have made in restructuring, as well as some of the challenges that still need to be resolved, are discussed in our three interim reports and the 72 individual board reports. These documents are posted on our website (<http://elc.edu.gov.on.ca>).

This chapter will highlight some of the key areas of success in restructuring. For a more detailed analysis of our observations and recommendations on these topics, please visit our website.

Governance

Most of the new district school boards are developing a strong identity. This process includes developing a vision statement in consultation with the board's staff, students, and community, and adopting policies to put the vision into practice.

Many boards across the province have made progress in redefining the role of trustees.

Some boards are making efforts to hold the director (and, through the director, senior staff) more accountable both for student achievement and for the overall performance of the administration.

However, we believe much more work needs to be done in this area, and will outline our recommendations for improvement later in this report.

All boards reported that they would have student trustees in place by September 1999. In our *Third Interim Report* (January 2000), we recommended that boards help students to learn about the democratic process by providing for the election of student trustees by their peers, and by supporting the inclusion of student opinion in board deliberations.

We strongly believe that all boards should implement the structures needed to ensure that student trustees are elected by their peers, and that student trustees' views are widely reported.

Administrative Restructuring

All school boards have made efforts to increase the efficiency of their administrations. This restructuring was, for the most part, completed quickly and effectively.

To assist with the reduction in size of board administration, the Ministry of Education provided boards with restructuring funds so they could offer their non-instructional staff incentives for early departure. In addition, temporary changes were made to pension plan rules, allowing many administrators and support staff to retire earlier than under previous regulations. Boards took advantage of these initiatives to make savings by:

- reducing staff
- amalgamating departments
- reducing the layers of administration between the schools and the director
- closing and/or selling surplus facilities.

New Financial Systems

One of the areas in which we have seen the greatest progress in restructuring is finance. Because financial operations are crucial to their overall operation, boards moved quickly in this area. In many cases, financial restructuring has improved the flow and accuracy of financial information, and in the long term should reduce costs and workload. Most boards restructured their financial operations with a reduced number of finance staff.

Boards are striving to make their financial services more efficient through the use of technology. The Ministry of Education provided significant restructuring funds to help boards achieve this goal, and we have noted many innovations across the province.

We anticipate that financial restructuring will enable boards to be more effective and efficient. In addition, the application of new technology will improve their access to current, accurate financial information. This will allow boards to report their finances more clearly to the public, resulting in a more open and accountable system.

A clear example of this effort to achieve savings is the reduction in the number of supervisory officers. In 1997, Ontario's school boards had 707 supervisory officers. This number fell to 515 in 1998, saving an estimated \$26.2 million. (See our *Third Interim Report* for an explanation of how these savings are calculated. Appendix B lists the changes in the number of supervisory officers employed by each board.)

In addition, boards have developed innovative business practices that require fewer employees to support the system (see the section "New Ways of Doing Business," below, for more details).

Administrative staffs experienced significantly higher workloads during the transition, and many administrators assumed more responsibilities. We commend their efforts to ensure that students' needs were met throughout the transition process.

The review gave the board a sense of what it had achieved and showed what it still needs to achieve. It is hoped that in future years it will make a difference.

New Ways of Doing Business

Throughout Ontario, boards have developed new, more collaborative and efficient ways of doing business. In our *Second Interim Report* (September 1999), we gave examples of these initiatives under the following headings: outsourcing, including partnerships, consortia, and cooperatives; technology; purchasing arrangements; and multi-use facilities. We believe much more can still be achieved in this area. Collaboration to reduce duplication, reduce costs, and provide a full range of high-quality services must become the norm. To help boards share their best ideas with each other, our document *Best of Effective Practices* presents exemplary collaborative practices of boards across the province. It includes contact names and links to board websites, and has been placed on our website to allow for wide access.

Boards have made good use of ministry restructuring funds, improving the technologies available for both teaching and administration. Many boards with geographically large jurisdictions use video and/or teleconferencing to help them conduct business.

The board review was a real learning experience for me. As a parent I was able to contribute to the larger process of education.

Barbara K. Johnson, Chairman

The Role of School Councils

The Minister of Education asked us, as part of our progress review of school boards, to examine the role of school councils in board decision-making processes, and the feasibility of increasing parental involvement in educational governance. During our review, we had the opportunity to meet with school council representatives in every board. Review teams learned a great deal about the restructuring process through these meetings. They also heard strong, continuing support for the findings of our report *The Road Ahead - III: A Report on the Role of School Councils* (November 1998).

Mandated school councils are relatively new to Ontario, and school boards vary in the degree to which they have embraced the councils' role. Some boards provide significant support to school councils, while other boards need to do a great deal more work. We believe school councils should have an effective voice in the development of school improvement plans and board policies. It is also important that school councils develop strategies to ensure the voice of all parents is reflected in deliberations at the school level.

Later in this report, we will describe initiatives the EIC will undertake this spring to support the role of school councils.

3. What Needs Work

As we have indicated in our previous reports, the restructuring process takes time and effort. Much progress has already been made. To build on this progress, continued action will be needed from all education partners, including the Ministry of Education and related agencies, trustees, senior school board administration, principals, teachers, and school councils. In addition, as we indicated in our *Third Interim Report*, officials at all levels of government must determine which services should be delivered and paid for by school boards, and which by municipalities, provincial ministries, and federal departments. In this chapter we discuss several issues that remain outstanding. In order to resolve these issues, each of the partners must help facilitate, within the scope of its mandate, ongoing improvement in our schools.

The New Funding Formula

Background to the Funding Formula

Among the changes that have had the greatest effect on school boards in the past two years is the implementation of the ministry's new funding formula. The new model was developed over many years. Successive provincial governments, led by three different parties, struggled to ensure that any new funding model would create greater equity in boards' ability to meet their students' needs. There was particular concern that any new model should recognize and respect the constitutional rights of Catholic and French-speaking citizens in Ontario to govern their own education.

The new funding formula has succeeded in achieving greater equity for students across the province. Rather than providing each board with an equal amount of money per student, the formula provides funding to each board on the basis of the needs of its students (see our *Third Interim Report* for examples).

Many factors contribute to the differences in funding allocations. They include the number of special education students; the number of students whose first language is not English or French; the size of the board; the location of the board; and the language of instruction. The funding model takes these factors into account through special purpose grants for the following areas:

- special education
- language
- geographic factors and school authorities
- learning opportunities
- continuing education
- teacher compensation
- early learning
- transportation
- school board administration and governance.

As we indicated in our second and third interim reports, the structure of the new funding formula is basically sound. That is, the formula covers all the relevant areas of school and board operations.

Nonetheless, as might be expected when such a significant change is introduced, we believe some adjustments are needed to ensure that the formula meets the needs of all students.

It was good to see exemplary practices highlighted – board reviews should continue

Principal's Council Bulletin

Components of the Funding Formula That Need Attention

Some boards are still not working within their funding allocations. For example, some boards spend more in areas such as administration or repairs and maintenance than they receive from the ministry for these purposes. We believe it is important that each board work within its funding allocation. However, the ministry needs to ensure that the specific components of the funding formula meet the needs of students. In our interim reports, we recommended that the ministry review and, where appropriate, enrich the formula as it relates to English as a second language; French first language; learning opportunities; First Nations students; special education; pupil accommodation; the small school factor for boards with many small, isolated schools; and board administration for very small boards. The Minister has recently announced enhancements to the funding formula as it applies to special education that will provide additional support for students with special needs.

In The Road Ahead - II: A Report on the Role of School Boards and Trustees (December 1997), we stated our belief that the ministry is responsible for providing sufficient and equitable funding to school boards, and that it is accountable to the people of Ontario for the "effective and efficient use of public funding allocated for education." We believe that, in order for the ministry to be truly

accountable for education spending, comparisons are needed with the education funding of other provinces and territories, as well as with that of other countries.

Recommendation 1

That the Minister of Education continue to work within the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada to ensure that accurate and relevant information concerning student performance and education funding be made available on a province-by-province basis, and to ensure that this data permits valid comparisons of student performance and per-pupil expenditures of different provinces and international jurisdictions.

Negotiations

One of the most fundamental changes to the funding of education in Ontario is that a board's overall budget is now established by the province. School boards have some flexibility to move funds among the various envelopes in the funding formula, for example from the non-classroom envelope to the classroom envelope. However, they cannot spend in total more than the formula provides, and cannot move money from the classroom envelope into the non-classroom envelope. This change is likely to have a significant impact on the next round of collective bargaining between boards and education employees.

Most collective agreements for education employees expire in August 2000, and many boards believe the next round of bargaining will be very difficult. Several boards told us they will be unable to sustain current salaries and working conditions once mitigation funding and operating reserves are no longer available (*mitigation funds* provide temporary funding to reduce the impact of a drop in general funding).

Moreover, as a result of the *Social Contract Act, 1993*, staff in the education sector have not received significant salary increases since the early 1990s. The current growth in our economy and recent settlements in other sectors will lead to an expectation on the part of education employees that they should make gains in the next round of negotiations. The ministry provides school boards with funding for salaries and benefits based on employees' workload, qualifications, and experience (and, in the case of teachers, factors such as class size). Many boards have been unable to fund teacher salaries and benefits within the ministry's allocation because of the teacher workload provisions negotiated into collective agreements. For example, collective agreements outline the amount of time secondary teachers must spend instructing students and the amount of time they have to prepare for their classes. In order to fund these provisions, some boards have transferred funding from the envelope designated for textbooks and classroom supplies. Others have transferred savings from non-classroom envelopes such as administration and

school operations, or have drawn on reserves or mitigation funds. In the future, if boards negotiate collective agreements that cost them more than the relevant funding envelope provides, they will continue to have to transfer funds from other envelopes of the funding formula to support these settlements.

The situation is made more complex by the fact that, as mentioned in earlier reports, several school boards are encountering shortages of teaching and other professional staff. As a result, some boards, particularly those in the north, have provided salaries above the provincial average to attract and retain principals, teachers, and some special education staff.

Many boards have saved money by reducing library and guidance classes, and by including in collective agreements the provision for "on-call" teachers to replace teachers who are absent (*on-call* teachers are teachers who are in the school but are not teaching a class during a particular period.) Many of the students we spoke to were concerned that on-call teachers are often not qualified to teach the subject of the class they are supervising - so students in effect have a supervised study period rather than a class taught by a teacher.

Students also expressed concern that extracurricular activities have been disrupted by labour disputes between boards and their teachers. In two cases, teachers have withdrawn all support for extracurricular programs, despite the existence of a collective agreement. **Students believe extracurricular activities are an essential part of their school program, and the EIC agrees.**

All these pressures point to the need for a careful reexamination of the base funding levels in the provincial funding formula. Although collective agreements are negotiated by boards and employee groups, the province now determines the foundation on which these negotiations are built.

Recommendation 2

That the Ministry of Education anticipate in the 2000-2001 funding formula the need for an appropriate increase in the compensation levels of school board employees; and that boards and employee groups recognize their responsibility to ensure that our education system operates effectively, and that students have full access to instructional and extracurricular programs.

Inclusive Practices and Communications

During our review, we had the opportunity to talk with people at all levels within school boards, as well as with community partners. We believe the operation of many boards would be improved if the individuals and groups affected by decisions had more and better opportunities to provide input before decisions are made. It is also essential that people who have given input receive feedback on how their comments have been incorporated in the final decision.

Communication among the partners in education must improve in order to involve community members more meaningfully in education. These partners include principals, teachers, caretakers, central office and professional support staff, students, and parents. Effective two-way communication is essential at all levels of board systems, as is communication from the Ministry of Education and its related agencies and commissions.

As noted earlier in this report, we consider it particularly important that boards develop mechanisms to ensure that school councils have an effective voice in policy development.

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The review allowed parents to get involved in the consultation process, which is essential to give direction to future activities.

Clarification of the Roles of Employees

The restructuring process has shifted roles and responsibilities within board systems. With fewer administrators in board offices, concern has been expressed about the downloading of administrative responsibilities to principals, vice-principals, and school secretaries. For accountability to be effective, the role of each individual within the board must be clear. Only when roles are clearly defined can we state who is responsible for what, and how each person is to be held accountable for his or her responsibilities. We believe the process of clarifying roles is most successful when it is approached in a systematic way. While some boards have made good progress in this area, the clarification of roles should receive wider consideration. We will discuss this issue in more detail in chapter 5.

Development of an Accountability Framework

We believe the development and implementation of a comprehensive accountability framework is the single factor that would have the greatest impact in improving our education system and student achievement. Such a framework should respect the constitutional rights of Catholic and French-speaking citizens, and would include strategies for accountability regarding such issues as:

- student performance
- standards of professional practice
- the effectiveness of school boards
- school boards' financial operations
- the leadership of the Ministry of Education, particularly regarding curriculum renewal and the adequacy of funding.

In a comprehensive accountability model, all these areas must be assessed, and the findings reported to the public in an accessible and easily understood form.

Recommendation 3

That the Ministry of Education develop and implement a comprehensive accountability framework for the publicly funded education sector no later than the 2001-2002 school year; and that the framework focus on a commitment to the ongoing improvement of student performance, standards of professional practice, the effectiveness of school boards and their allocation of available funding, and the adequacy of funding and other support from the Ministry of Education.

We believe accountability is a vitally important topic. The next chapter describes what a comprehensive accountability framework would look like.

4. A Provincial Framework for Accountability

Improving Boards by Strengthening Accountability

What Does Accountability Mean?

The trust, support, and understanding of parents and the community are essential to a successful education system. Such community support is earned when boards produce good results and provide good value for taxpayers' dollars. It requires that the public be well informed and engaged in the education process, and that the education system be clearly accountable to the public. Accountability promotes ongoing improvements in the system, open dialogue about the objectives of education, and the ability to move ahead with necessary changes.

The call for increased accountability in education is not new. But the meaning of accountability has often been unclear.

The Royal Commission on Learning concluded the following in its report, *For the Love of Learning* (1994):

Accountability means exactly that: Who accounts to the public for what happens in schools? Equally, it could be called responsibility: Who is responsible for the performance of our schools? How do we know what we are entitled to expect from schools? How do we know whether schools are delivering on this entitlement? Whom do we hold to account - who is responsible - if we are not satisfied with the answers we get?

Accountability in the education system, then, means that information has to be available to the public, to taxpayers, and to parents, in a form that allows them to have reasonable expectations of the system, to make reasonable judgements about how well the system has performed, and to know who is responsible if they are not satisfied. (IV: 137)

The EIC believes the public has the right to know the following:

- how schools and boards perform on key indicators of success*
- how schools and boards plan to improve
- how schools and boards respond to provincial and local priorities
- how boards allocate resources to contribute to student success
- how the provincial education system performs on key indicators
- the province's priorities for education
- the province's plans for improvement
- whether the resources provided by the province are appropriate.

Here in Ontario, the Ministry of Education has responded to public demand by introducing new, standard report cards that report individual student achievement. But what about schools, school boards, and others who are responsible for ensuring that our students' education is successful? How do we ensure *their* accountability?

The EICs review has made a difference to our board - many areas identified for improvement in the report are showing up on the board's agenda.

Lower Merion School Board, 1994

* Indicators are factors that research shows are related to student performance. Examples are student attendance, students' destinations on leaving school, and gender differences in achievement.

Our Progress Review of District School Boards

One such accountability mechanism is the EIC's recent review of the progress school boards have made since restructuring took place in January 1998. It is the first time an independent review of school boards has taken place in Ontario. Indeed, British Columbia is the only Canadian jurisdiction with a comprehensive, ongoing mandatory accreditation system for all publicly funded schools.

Nonetheless, accreditation programs such as independent reviews are certainly not new elsewhere in the world. Britain's Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) is a non-ministerial government department set up in 1992 to improve standards of achievement and quality of education through independent inspection, public reporting, and informed independent advice. Many education departments in the United States have developed similar review structures.

We believe independent reviews, such as the one we have just completed, contribute to the overall accountability, performance, and improvement of school boards. While it is true that board members are already accountable to their electorate, independent reviews provide the public with more information, allowing them to make more informed decisions and to hold their elected trustees to a higher level of accountability. Reviews help ensure, for example, that boards spend

public funds in ways that best support student learning. Independent reviews also:

- provide information that helps trustees, staff, and other education partners to focus more clearly on improving student performance
- encourage the development of partnerships among boards, schools, and school communities
- encourage the sharing of "best practices" among boards
- stimulate debate.

At the end of our review of school boards, the EIC conducted an evaluation of the review process. We distributed surveys to everyone who took part in the reviews, asked provincial associations and unions for their feedback, and analyzed correspondence and media coverage. The evaluation was designed to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the process, to assess how the review has affected school board practices, and to help in the design of any future reviews.

In general, respondents strongly supported regular, ongoing reviews of school boards. Their reasons included:

- the need for boards to be held accountable
- the need for staff, students, parents, and the community to have the opportunity to reflect on their board's practices, achievements, and problems

- the need for board staff to receive positive reinforcement and acknowledgement of their hard work

- the need for a third-party perspective on what is going well and which issues need to be addressed.

Our evaluation also showed how future reviews could be improved. Many participants told us they would have liked more time to express their views to members of the review teams. We heard that some people found it hard to give input because of the great distances they had to travel to take part, and because the development of teleconference facilities is still in its early stages. We believe that once teleconference facilities are more widely used, it will be easier to ensure the participation of people throughout boards that are spread across large areas.

The most significant and common concern was that the scope of the reviews was too narrow. Many participants said the reviews failed to deal adequately with the central mandate of schools and school boards - that is, the programs and services offered to students. We acknowledge this concern. Our reviews focused on boards' business and administrative practices, because this area has been the central mandate of EIC.

Ongoing Independent Board Reviews

We believe that future independent reviews of school boards should address *all* aspects of board responsibility. Such reviews should not only include, but should focus on, the programs and services offered to students and the results that students achieve. They should centre on the question: "How successful is this board in promoting a high level of student achievement?"

Such reviews should be conducted on a three- or five-year cycle, with each board being reviewed once in that period. Reports on the reviews should be directed to the Minister of Education, and should always be public documents.

A process of ongoing independent reviews would not diminish the rights of school boards to operate under the overall framework of the *Education Act* - in fact, as noted above, reviews have great potential to strengthen boards. We acknowledge that a review process must be developed in such a way that it not interfere with the constitutional rights of Catholic or French-speaking communities.

Because the proposed review process would focus on fostering ongoing improvement, it would be necessary to develop a standard of performance against which a board's operations could be measured. Boards that exceeded the standard would be reviewed again in the normal cycle. Those that did not reach

the standard would receive a set of recommendations for improvement, and would be re-reviewed after one or two years to ensure that progress was being made.

In the unlikely event of a board still failing to meet the expected standard after a re-review, the Ministry of Education would need to prescribe a set of actions to ensure speedy improvement. This would be a rare event, as it is, for example, in the process for accrediting hospitals.

We reiterate that the proposed review process is intended to focus on and ensure improvement, and to strengthen, rather than to usurp, the role of school boards in providing educational services.

The EIC has demonstrated that an independent agency can effectively review the operations of school boards. While we believe an independent agency should be authorized to conduct ongoing reviews, the EIC is not the agency to conduct them, since our mandate to oversee the transition to the new district school boards ends in December 2000. If board reviews are to continue, another agency must be authorized to conduct them. We have identified two options the Minister of Education could consider for this purpose: she can request that the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) undertake reviews, or she can establish a new independent agency. Either option could work, but in our view the second option is preferable.

The EQAO was established by the *Education Quality and Accountability Act, 1996*. The office has seven objects, including:

- to evaluate the public accountability of boards and to collect information on strategies for improving that accountability
- to report to the public and to the Minister of Education on the results of tests and generally on the quality and effectiveness of elementary and secondary school education and on the public accountability of boards.

While these objects do not conform precisely to the parameters of the review process we are proposing, the EQAO does currently have a mandate to review some aspects of board operations.

Additionally, its status as an independent agency would give the review process credibility. Therefore we believe the proposed review process could be assigned to an expanded and restructured EQAO.

The disadvantage of this approach is that the EQAO would be conducting both student testing and board reviews. This situation could lead to a perceived conflict of interest. For example, if a board were concerned about any aspect of the testing process or the results its students had achieved, it would be difficult for the board to have confidence in a board review process conducted by the same agency that had tested the students.

The review was a "one-shot" discussion. It would be interesting to meet with the EIC again to look at progress.

President of the
Education Quality and
Accountability Office

A second option would be to create a new agency to conduct board reviews. This agency would report directly to the legislature, and its mandate would be to improve student performance by facilitating improvements in school boards. The agency would use the EQAO's student achievement results as a starting point for its reviews. In addition to providing recommendations to individual boards, the agency could create "report cards" for the province as a whole. It could also conduct research to determine what effective boards do to improve student performance.

In summary, we believe that responsibility to the public is fundamental to the ongoing accountability and improvement of the education system. A process of ongoing school board reviews conducted by an independent agency would increase public accountability. While the proposed reviews could be conducted successfully by the EQAO or by a new independent agency that reported to the legislature, we believe the second option is preferable.

Recommendation 4

That the Minister of Education empower an independent agency to conduct reviews of school boards, focused on the question, "How successful is this board in promoting a high level of student achievement?"; and that an appropriate budget be provided to the agency to conduct the reviews.

Improving the Performance of Students

Increasing the Availability of Performance Data

While the main focus of our review of Ontario's 72 district school boards was on the restructuring that has occurred since 1998, one of the mandates we received from the Minister was to examine the methods school boards are using to report to their communities.

In response to this mandate, we asked, for example, about the ways boards inform the community about their financial operations; about publications that explain the board's finances and spending plans; and about processes for encouraging input into the budget-setting process.

When we asked, "How well is the board doing financially?", the vast majority of trustees, senior staff, principals, union and non-union staff representatives, and, in many cases, parents and community members, could speak from an informed position. They knew the issues and pressures; they understood the funding formula and its impact.

However, when we asked the obvious and more central question, "How well are your students performing?", we were disappointed to learn that most boards, with a few notable exceptions, did not know the answer.

Boards do of course know their students' EQAO results for mathematics and language in Grades 3 and 6 - but otherwise they know very little about their students' overall performance levels. Very few boards have developed comprehensive, public processes for monitoring performance. Trustees, senior staff, and community members are often not familiar with even such fundamental information as the percentage of students that earn graduating diplomas.

In most cases, basic performance data about individual schools and the board as a whole - other than EQAO results - is simply not available to the trustees or the public. We recognize the value of the EQAO's assessment of student achievement, and support the continuation of its work. Nonetheless, more data is needed about student performance, and we believe boards should assess their students to provide this data.

Not all useful data requires additional student testing. For example, boards should publish figures on issues that affect performance, such as attendance, the number of students who move frequently from school to school, and the rate at which secondary students gain credits. Nor does improvement in performance necessarily depend on the collection of new data. In some cases, more consistent collection and presentation of data could reveal ways to make improvements.

To this end, we believe schools and boards should use a standard, province-wide format to publish data on key indicators of student performance. We call these proposed documents **school and board report cards**. We recommended in our report *The Road Ahead - III* that the Ministry of Education develop standard report cards, and our review of school boards reinforced our belief in the need for these documents. The discussion that follows reflects the development of our thinking on this issue.

School and board report cards, like the current student report cards, must include certain uniform elements that allow the collection of consistent, up-to-date information on all schools and boards.

This should include data on key indicators of student performance, such as:

- student achievement, including EQAO test results
- student attendance
- credit accumulation and graduation rates
- students' destinations on leaving school
- gender differences in achievement
- school safety.

The EQAO is currently developing a provincial program to identify indicators of student performance and to collect data on those indicators.

Given the diversity of this province, it is essential that each school and board respond to the needs of its local community. Therefore, in addition to the uniform elements, the report cards should include space for information on issues unique to each school or board.

Many other provinces, including Alberta, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and the Atlantic provinces, have already developed comprehensive indicator programs, and similar programs exist in many jurisdictions in the United States and Europe.

However, many provinces' indicator programs are simply statistical summaries that do not focus on school improvement. In our opinion, the main purpose of publishing data on key indicators of student performance is to bring about improvement at the school level. We are encouraged by the EQAO's present work in developing a provincial indicator program for Ontario, and urge the EQAO to focus on those indicators that are most clearly tied to student achievement.

In choosing which indicators of student performance we should concentrate on, perhaps the most important question is:

"Would an improvement in this indicator of performance benefit students?"

For example, improving scores in mathematics, language, or other key curriculum areas would obviously benefit students. Additionally, research presented in our earlier *Road Ahead* reports supports the widespread belief that an important relationship exists between student success and issues such as attendance, credit accumulation, graduation rates, and parental and community involvement in education.

Our main concern in proposing the development of report cards that report on school and board performance is that boards be as familiar with the issues that affect student performance as they are with issues that relate to education funding. While some boards are exceptional in their attention to collecting and reporting student performance data, they are a minority at present. We would like to see a situation in which all boards are equally attentive to the crucial process of collecting and publishing data on indicators of student performance, as part of their overall commitment to accountability and improved student learning.

To assure the public of the accuracy of the report cards, a verification process would need to be developed. Additionally, the ministry would need to ensure that boards made the reports available to parents.

The best feature of the report card is its "report card" dimension, which gives us an opportunity to take stock and move forward.

By the way, the report card is not a report card.



Recommendation 5

That the Ministry of Education collect examples currently in use in the province of excellent report cards that report on school and board performance, to aid the development of a standard report card for all schools and boards in Ontario; that the ministry require (1) all principals, in consultation with their school councils, and (2) all school boards, through their directors of education, to publish and distribute annual report cards that report on the performance of their students; that the report cards include consistent data on the following:

- student achievement, including the results of Education Quality and Accountability Office tests, board-administered tests, and any national or international tests
- student attendance
- graduation rates of secondary students
- student destinations after graduation
- gender differences and other differences in achievement
- school safety
- any other relevant areas; and that the report card provide adequate space for the reporting of progress in locally determined priorities.

Recommendation 6

That a verification process be developed to assure the public of the accuracy of school and board report cards.

Samples showing possible formats for elementary and secondary school report cards are provided at the end of this chapter.

Planning for Improvement

As stated above, the main purpose of collecting and publishing accurate, relevant data about student performance is to aid planning for improvement.

Many, but by no means all, boards currently have policies that ensure regular planning for school improvement. Many principals and staff engage in regular improvement planning, whether or not it is required by their board. In addition, as part of its work in testing students in Grades 3 and 6, the EQAO has asked boards to develop and submit action plans in response to their students' EQAO achievement results.

In the document *Best of Effective Practices*, we describe some of the most effective approaches to school improvement planning across the province. Every school can bring about improvements, whatever its current levels of student performance. To ensure that all schools and boards plan for improvement, we

recommended in our report *The Road Ahead - III* the development of annual school and board improvement plans. Our review of school boards reinforced our belief in the need for improvement plans, and the recommendations that follow restate that belief.

We believe school improvement plans should be developed in consultation with school councils, and should be public documents. In our opinion, schools would become more effective and would enjoy stronger public support if mechanisms were established to ensure such consultation. Though we have seen many fine examples of school improvement plans, we have seen few whose development included a meaningful role for school councils. To help schools and boards plan such a process, the EIC intends to work in cooperation with a small number of schools and boards to develop a model for school improvement planning that includes a meaningful role for school councils. We will publish the results of this project later this year.

Recommendation 7

That the Ministry of Education collect and publish examples of excellent school and board improvement plans currently in use in the province, to help school boards to develop their own improvement plans; that the ministry require (1) all principals, in consultation with their school councils, and (2) all school boards,

through their directors of education, to develop and monitor annual improvement plans; and that the plans:

- **be publicly available documents**
- **be based on the analysis of school and board report cards**
- **reflect the academic and other expectations established by the ministry and the boards**
- **be informed by the improvement goals of their boards and vice versa**
- **include a formal process for monitoring and reporting progress toward improvement goals.**

Ensuring Provincial Accountability

The Ministry of Education is accountable to the people of Ontario for standards in student achievement and for the effective and efficient use of public funds. The role of the ministry is to:

- articulate a vision of education for the province
- set province-wide direction, including establishing a curriculum that specifies what students should know at each level
- provide sufficient and equitable funding to school boards
- ensure that boards allocate their resources according to the ministry's framework.

If, as we proposed above, schools and boards are required to publish a set of key student performance indicators and be accountable for improvement in those areas, then the Ministry of Education should have a similar responsibility for province-wide performance.

Recommendation 8

That the Education Quality and Accountability Office publish an annual provincial report card that includes a provincial summary of the data published in individual school and board report cards; and that the focus of this report be information about student performance.

students. As noted earlier, we believe school report cards and improvement plans should include sections that address local priorities. Additionally, we believe **school profiles** should be published to help parents and other community members understand the features that make each school unique.

It is important that school profiles be used to help parents interpret report cards and to help schools develop improvement plans - not to excuse a lack of improvement in student performance. We need to have high expectations for all our students, while recognizing that students and schools face varying challenges in striving toward these expectations. To ensure that student performance data is read in context, and that planning for improvement takes into account local factors, we propose that school profiles be developed using the following categories:

- student demographics
- enrolment trends
- languages spoken in the home
- mission statement
- program priorities
- programs and services offered (e.g., guidance and library services)
- facilities
- class sizes
- the number of students who move frequently from school to school
- other relevant information.

Recommendation 9

That the Ministry of Education develop and publish an annual provincial improvement plan that outlines its role in helping boards make improvements at the local level; and that this plan be based on an analysis of the provincial report card published annually by the Education Quality and Accountability Office.

Providing a Local Context

Schools across Ontario vary widely in their location, their size, and the languages their students speak at home, among other factors. Schools also vary in the programs they offer. For example, they offer a broad range of special education programs to meet the needs of all

Accountability is needed to ensure the responsible and efficient use of scarce resources, whether at the classroom, board, or ministry level.

Parents' Council Ontario

Similarly, **board profiles** should be published to provide a local context for the interpretation of board report cards. The structure of board profiles would be similar to that of school profiles. A profile would include information on, for example, a board's characteristics, budget, and priorities for improvement, as well as an explanation of how parents and other community partners are involved in board activities.

Many schools already publish school profiles, and many - but by no means all - boards prescribe a common format for school profiles. In some boards, each school publishes student achievement results for the EQAO's Grade 3 and 6 language and mathematics tests, accompanied by a school profile that gives basic student demographic data and other relevant information about the school.

Such exemplary practices inform parents about their children's school and the performance of its students, and thereby increase accountability. We would like to see the practices currently employed by the most progressive schools and boards extended to all schools and boards in the province.

Recommendation 10

That the Ministry of Education require all principals, in consultation with their school councils, and all school boards, through their directors of education, to publish school and board profiles; that the profiles contain contextual

information to help parents and others interpret school and board report cards; that the ministry define what types of contextual data should be common to all profiles; and that the ministry collect and publish examples of excellent profiles currently in use in the province, to help schools and boards design their own profiles.

A sample showing a possible format for school profiles is provided at the end of this chapter.

Implications of a New Accountability Framework

We have stated that student performance data, in order to be useful, must be consistent from school to school and from board to board. The data collection process must be seamless, allowing data to flow from schools to boards, and then to the EQAO. Such a process would allow for statistical evaluation and review at a number of levels. To set up a data collection system to support this process would be a considerable undertaking.

There is a major role here for the Ministry of Education, which must take the lead in deciding what student performance data should be collected and published. The ministry must also develop appropriate standard definitions to ensure that data is consistent. The EQAO should be responsible for the collection, analysis, and publication of the data.

We recognize that Ontario's schools and boards already gather much data. But the data collected is inconsistent and, for many schools and boards, certain important data is not available. Much of the data that is available is not easily accessible for members of the public. **The EIC believes that key information on factors related to student achievement must become more readily available to parents and other community members.**

For example, we believe that students' destinations on leaving the school system are a key indicator of schools' performance in preparing them for the workplace, training programs, and postsecondary education. Yet, despite the focus on preparing students for the world beyond school, there is little reliable data that shows our students' destinations on a school-by-school or board-by-board basis. **The development of a province-wide "student number" system, which would allow students to be tracked as they progressed through their education, would support the collection of such data.** (Care would be needed to ensure the privacy of individual students.)

The consistent collection and publication of key student performance data would require a comprehensive technological strategy, including a standard student information system and a common process by which schools entered data. At present, every school keeps track of, for example, individual student attendance - but not every school has the capacity

The review made boards take a good, hard look at themselves - at what they have done and what they plan to do in the future.

You didn't stuff anything down your throat.

to track total student attendance, other than manually, since many schools, especially those in the elementary panel, lack electronic student information systems. (However, it should be noted that many boards are currently installing more comprehensive and flexible student information systems. This trend should greatly ease the task of collecting and publishing consistent, reliable student performance data.)

Even where school- and board-wide performance data is collected, it is likely that definitions and reporting vary. For data to be consistent, all partners must agree on the definitions. Take, for example, the question of defining a high school graduate. For schools and boards to report consistently and comparably on the percentage of students who graduate, a common, province-wide definition of the term would be needed.

As the preceding paragraphs show, to create a province-wide framework for consistent data collection and reporting, based on a set of key indicators of student performance, would be a significant challenge in terms of technological infrastructure, school practice, collection, and definition of terms. Additionally, we appreciate that establishing the proposed framework would require some additional resources. The Ministry of Education would have to accept the responsibility for providing appropriate funding.

Recommendation 11

That the Ministry of Education, in consultation with the Education Quality and Accountability Office and school boards, develop an information technology plan to support the development of consistent and accurate school, board, and ministry report cards and profiles; that the plan be based on the goal of implementing standard report cards and profiles by the 2002-2003 school year; that the plan provide for appropriate support and funding to school boards and the EQAO; and that the plan contain standard definitions of data to be used by the ministry, schools, and boards in developing report cards and profiles.

Ensuring Quality in the Teaching Profession

The commitment to quality in the teaching profession has three major components.

The commitment to quality comes first and most fundamentally from the individual teacher. As professionals working in the important community endeavour of public education, teachers must - and the overwhelming majority do - take responsibility for the standard of their own work.

Secondly, quality is ensured by school boards. Boards must, and do, establish and implement evaluation processes that provide teachers with professional advice and direction, as well as policies that ensure effective and ethical practice. Additionally, boards provide teachers with training opportunities to help them adjust to change in areas such as curriculum, procedures, assessment processes, and technology. Boards also establish and enforce disciplinary procedures.

Thirdly, quality is ensured by the Ontario College of Teachers, which was established by the *Ontario College of Teachers Act*, 1996. The objects of the college are as follows:

1. To regulate the profession of teaching and to govern its members.
2. To develop, establish and maintain qualifications for membership in the College.
3. To accredit professional teacher education programs offered by post-secondary educational institutions.
4. To accredit ongoing education programs for teachers offered by post-secondary educational institutions and other bodies.
5. To issue, renew, amend, suspend, cancel, revoke and reinstate certificates of qualification and registration.
6. To provide for the ongoing education of members of the College.
7. To establish and enforce professional standards and ethical standards applicable to members of the College.

The review report gave a snapshot of the progress of amalgamation, and provided our board with excellent public relations

*Senior Administration
Eastern Ontario*



8. To receive and investigate complaints against members of the College and to deal with discipline and fitness to practise issues.
9. To develop, provide and accredit educational programs leading to certificates of qualification additional to the certificate required for membership, including but not limited to certificates of qualification as a supervisory officer, and to issue, renew, amend, suspend, cancel, revoke and reinstate such additional certificates.
10. To communicate with the public on behalf of the members of the College.
11. To perform such additional functions as are prescribed by the regulations.

We support the College of Teachers in its role of regulating the profession, and urge it to develop processes to ensure that teachers' credentials are kept up to date. We endorse the notion of a process of teacher reaccreditation proposed in the Royal Commission's report *For the Love of Learning*:

That mandatory professional development be required for all educators in the publicly funded school system, with continuing certification every five years, dependent on both satisfactory performance and participation in professional development recognized by the College of Teachers. (III: 33)

We are confident that the great majority of teachers are committed to maintaining professional standards, and so a process of reaccreditation would not require a dramatic change to the current practice of these teachers.

...the review definitely made a difference to us, the board is now focused on the issues noted above, still being proud of the accomplishments it has made

Possible Formats for School Report Cards and Profiles

The following samples show possible formats for school report cards and school profiles, and include notes on the type of information that principals should include.



ELEMENTARY SCHOOL REPORT CARD

BOARD INFORMATION

Include information such as board name and logo, names of director of education and chair, vision statement.

SCHOOL INFORMATION

Include information such as school name and address; grades; numbers of students and staff; telephone and fax numbers; e-mail and website addresses; names of principal, vice-principal(s), secretary, school council representative, superintendent, and trustee(s).

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

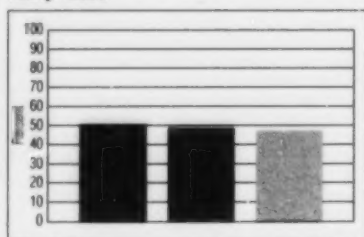
EQAO Assessments

Use charts or graphs to display the results of the Grade 3 and Grade 6 Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) assessments in reading, writing, and mathematics (see example*). Show the percentage of participating students who achieved at or above the provincial standard (i.e., Level 3 or Level 4). In addition to the school results, show percentages for the board and for the province as a whole.

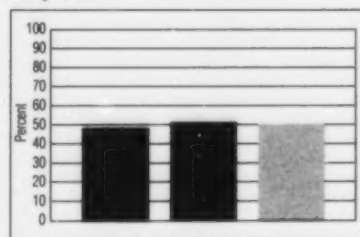
Comment on significant features of your school's assessment results (e.g., exemptions, gender differences, special education, ESL/ESD, attitude survey).

Grade 3 EQAO Assessments: Percentage of Students Achieving Level 3 or Level 4

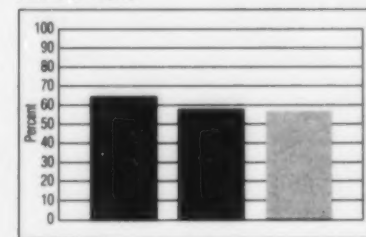
Reading – Grade 3



Writing – Grade 3



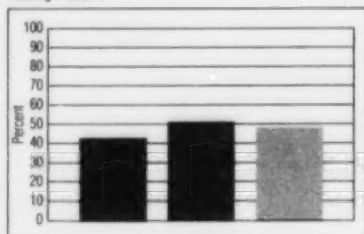
Mathematics – Grade 3



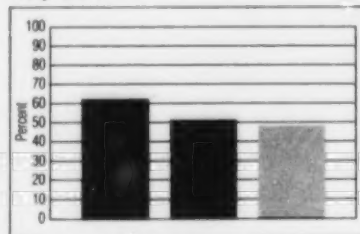
■ School ■ Board ■ Province

Grade 6 EQAO Assessments: Percentage of Students Achieving Level 3 or Level 4

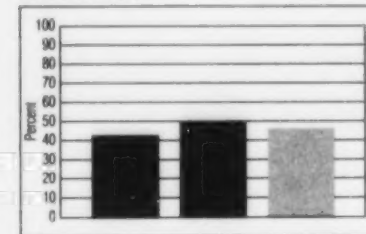
Reading – Grade 6



Writing – Grade 6



Mathematics – Grade 6



■ School ■ Board ■ Province

Other Assessments

Graphically report the results of other board-wide, national, or international assessments in which your school has participated. Show school results in relation to other populations tested.

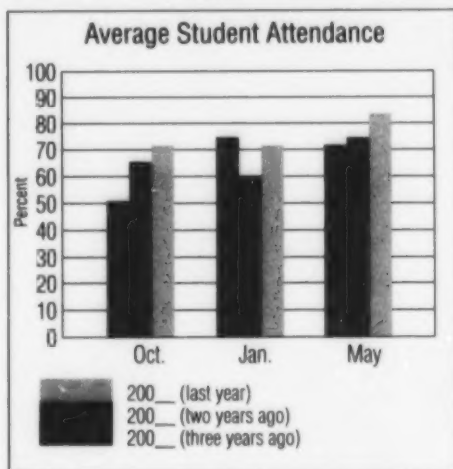
Comment on any significant features of the assessment results.

* All graphs in this sample school report card are examples for illustration only. Other ways of displaying the data may also be appropriate.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Use a chart or graph to show average attendance for three key months (e.g., October, January, and May) in each of the last three full school years. Show average attendance as a percentage of maximum possible attendance for each month (see example).

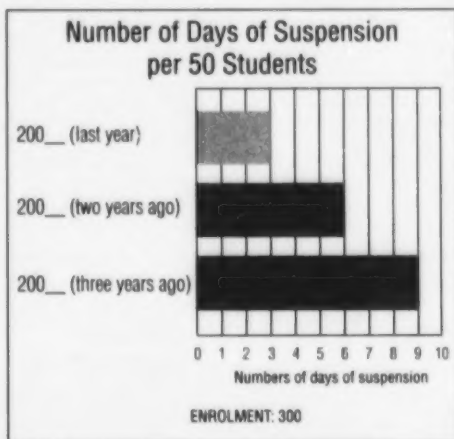
Comment on any significant features of attendance patterns.



STUDENT SUSPENSIONS

For each of the last three years, chart or graph the number of days of suspension per 50 students (see example).

Outline school initiatives designed to address issues related to suspension.



SCHOOL SAFETY

Describe ways in which the school promotes safety (e.g., safe arrival program, conflict resolution, peer mediation, substance abuse prevention program).

COMMUNICATIONS

Detail the various ways in which the school communicates with staff, students, parents, the school council, and other community members (e.g., meetings, forums, newsletters, surveys, voice mail, e-mail, website).

Describe how the school solicits input into its decisions and actions, and how the information received is used in making decisions.

Report on significant factors that affect communications.

SCHOOL COUNCIL

In consultation with the school council, give a summary of school council activities in the last school year that encouraged student achievement and school improvement.

Outline school council activities that were planned for the current school year to encourage student achievement and school improvement.

STUDENT COUNCIL

If the school has a student council, give a summary of student council activities in the last school year that encouraged student achievement and school improvement.

Outline student council activities that were planned for the current school year to encourage student achievement and school improvement.

IMPLEMENTATION OF CURRICULUM

Outline progress on the implementation of the provincial curriculum, and summarize staff development activities that have been undertaken or planned to support further implementation.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Summarize the main goals of the school improvement plan for the current school year, emphasizing both areas of strength that will be further enhanced and areas that require improvement.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Add any other significant comments, graphics, or statistics not included in other parts of this report card.

SECONDARY SCHOOL REPORT CARD

BOARD INFORMATION

Include information such as board name and logo, names of director of education and chair, vision statement.

SCHOOL INFORMATION

Include information such as school name and address; grades; numbers of students and staff; telephone and fax numbers; e-mail and website addresses; names of principal, vice-principal(s), secretary, school council representative, superintendent, and trustee(s).

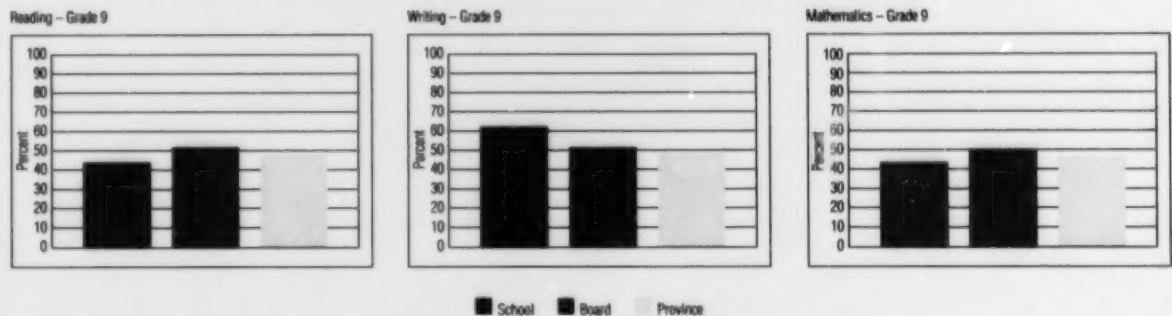
STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

EQAO Assessments

Use a chart or graph to display the results of the Grade 9 Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) assessments in reading, writing, and mathematics (see example*). Show the percentage of participating students who achieved at or above the provincial standard (i.e., Level 3 or Level 4). In addition to the school information, show percentages for the board and for the province as a whole.

Comment on significant features of your school's assessment results (e.g., exemptions, gender differences, special education, ESL/ESD, attitude survey).

Grade 9 EQAO Assessments: Percentage of Students Achieving Level 3 or Level 4



Grade 10 Literacy Test

Graphically report the percentage of students in your school, in your board, and provincially who successfully completed the Grade 10 Literacy Test in their Grade 10 year.

Comment on the significant features of the assessment results.

Other Assessments

Graphically report the results of other board-wide, national, or international assessments in which your school has participated. Show school results in relation to other populations tested.

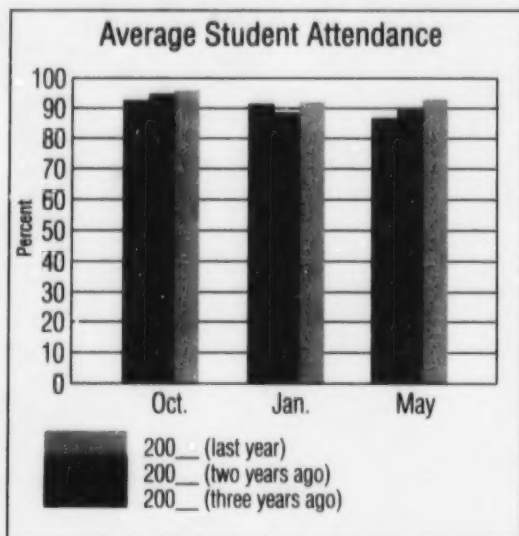
Comment on any significant features of the assessment results.

* All graphs and charts in this sample school report card are examples for illustration only. Other ways of displaying the data may also be appropriate.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

For each of the last three full school years, use a chart or graph to show average attendance for three key months (e.g., October, January, and May). Show average attendance as a percentage of maximum possible attendance for each month (see example).

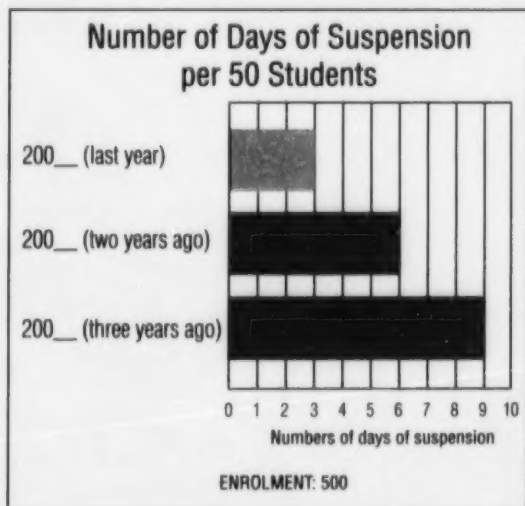
Comment on any significant features of attendance patterns.



STUDENT SUSPENSIONS

For the last three years, chart or graph the number of days of suspension per 50 students (see example).

Outline school initiatives designed to address issues related to suspensions.



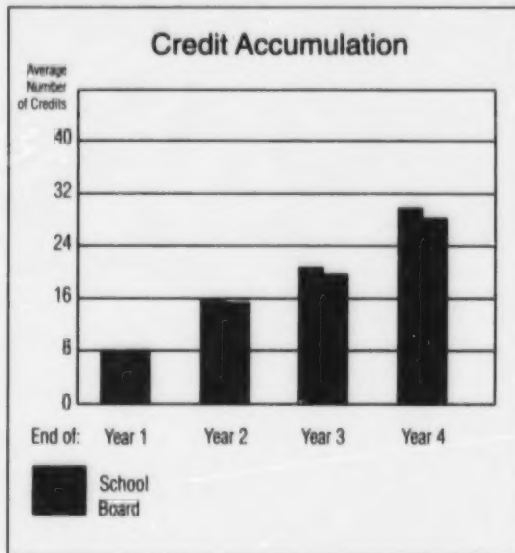
SCHOOL SAFETY

Describe ways in which the school promotes safety (e.g., attendance programs, conflict resolution training, anti-harassment policies, student council initiatives, substance abuse prevention program).

CREDIT ACCUMULATION

In chart or graph form, show the average number of credits acquired in the previous school year by students at the end of their first, second, third, and fourth years (see example). In addition to the school results, show the average number of credits for the board as a whole.

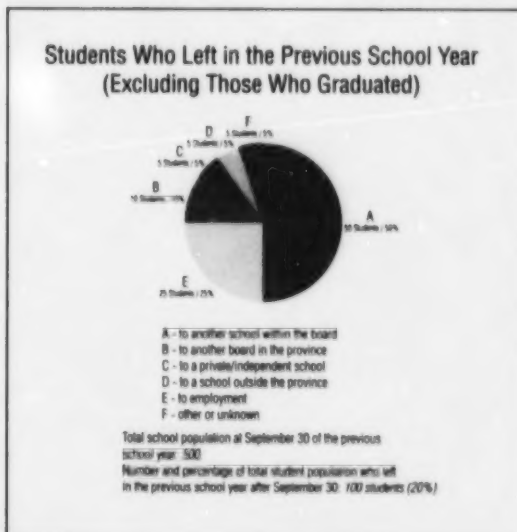
Report the number and percentage of graduating students who completed their diploma requirements in four years. Comment on any significant factors related to credit accumulation in the school.



STUDENTS WHO LEFT IN THE PREVIOUS SCHOOL YEAR (EXCLUDING THOSE WHO GRADUATED)

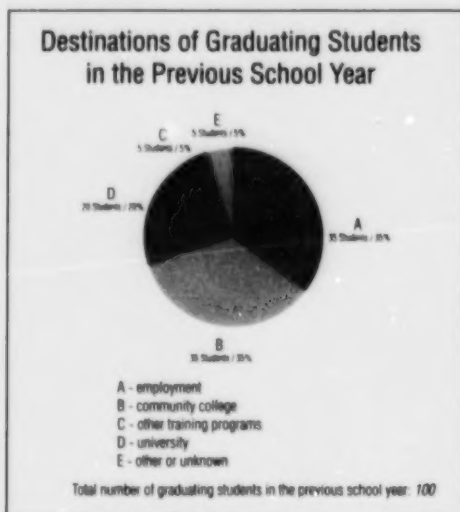
In chart or graph form, report the number and percentage of students who left before graduating in the previous school year (see example). Specify their destinations (e.g., another school within the board, another board in the province, a private/independent school, a school outside the province, employment, other, unknown).

Comment on any significant factors related to school-leaving statistics.



DESTINATIONS OF GRADUATING STUDENTS IN THE PREVIOUS SCHOOL YEAR

Report by number and percentage the destinations of students who graduated in the previous school year (see example). Specify their destinations (e.g., employment, community college, other training programs, university, other, unknown). Comment on any significant factors related to the destinations of graduating students.



COMMUNICATIONS

Detail the various ways in which the school communicates with staff, students, parents, the school council, and other community members (e.g., meetings, forums, newsletters, surveys, voice mail, e-mail, website).

Describe how the school solicits input into its decisions and actions, and how the information received is used in making decisions.

Report on significant factors that affect communications.

SCHOOL COUNCIL

In consultation with the school council, give a summary of school council activities in the last school year that encouraged student achievement and school improvement.

Outline school council activities that were planned for the current school year to encourage student achievement and school improvement

STUDENT COUNCIL

In consultation with the student council, provide a summary of student council activities in the last school year that encouraged student achievement and school improvement.

Outline student council activities that were planned for the current school year to encourage student achievement and school improvement.

IMPLEMENTATION OF CURRICULUM

Outline progress on the implementation of the provincial curriculum, and summarize staff development activities that have been undertaken or planned to support further implementation.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Summarize the main goals of the school improvement plan for the current school year, emphasizing both areas of strength that will be further enhanced and areas that require improvement.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Add any other significant comments, graphics, or statistics not included in other parts of this report card.

SCHOOL PROFILE (ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY)

BOARD INFORMATION

Include information such as board name and logo, names of director of education and chair, vision statement.

SCHOOL INFORMATION

Include information such as school name and address; grades; numbers of students and staff; telephone and fax numbers; e-mail and website addresses; names of principal, vice-principal(s), secretary, school council representative, superintendent, and trustee(s).

SCHOOL DESCRIPTION

Include information such as origin of the school name; age, size, and history of the building; characteristics of the school community; catchment area; and any other relevant information.

MISSION STATEMENT

Provide the school mission statement, and include the school vision and/or philosophy if formulated.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Instructional

Describe the instructional programs offered to students (e.g., special education, early intervention programs, ESL/ESD, Native second language, French second language, guidance, library, technology, cooperative education, apprenticeship programs).

Cocurricular/Extracurricular

Describe cocurricular/extracurricular programs available to students (e.g., arts, athletics, international languages, student council, year book, anti-violence or anti racism programs, environment/ecology).

Community

Describe community programs and services available in the school (e.g., nutrition, before- and after-school care, child care, social service agency programs, college and university programs).

Other Special Features

Comment on any other significant elements of the programs and services available in the school.

PROGRAM PRIORITIES

Summarize program priorities, as related to the school mission statement and improvement plan.

BUDGET PRIORITIES

Outline budget priorities for the current school year, as related to the program priorities.

FACILITIES

List and describe the school's facilities, including classrooms, portables, and special purpose rooms.

Include a floor plan, and comment on any significant features of the school's facilities.

STUDENT TRANSPORTATION

Report the number and percentage of students bused daily. Indicate the percentage of students bused daily for specialized programs (e.g., special education, French immersion).

Describe other transportation arrangements used for program purposes (e.g., music, design and technology, family studies).

Comment on any significant features of the school's transportation arrangements.

STAFF

Provide a description of the school staff (e.g., the numbers of teachers, education assistants/teacher assistants, secretarial/administrative/clerical staff, caretakers/custodians, technicians).

STUDENT INFORMATION

Provide information about the student population for the current year and the last two years (see example*). Give numbers and/or percentages as appropriate. Include information that reflects the characteristics of the local school population.

Comment on any significant trends or features related to the makeup of the student population.

Student Information for Current and The Last Two Years						
CATEGORY	200__ (Current Year)		200__ (Last Year)		200__ (Year Before Last)	
	Percentage	Numbers	Percentage	Numbers	Percentage	Numbers
Total Number of Students	n/a		n/a		n/a	
Female Students						
Male Students						
Number of Languages Spoken at Home	n/a		n/a		n/a	
Countries of Origin	n/a		n/a		n/a	
Students Born in Canada						
Students in Canada Less Than 2 Years						
Students in Canada From 2 to 5 Years						
Students Born in Canada Whose First Language is not English						
Student Turnover						

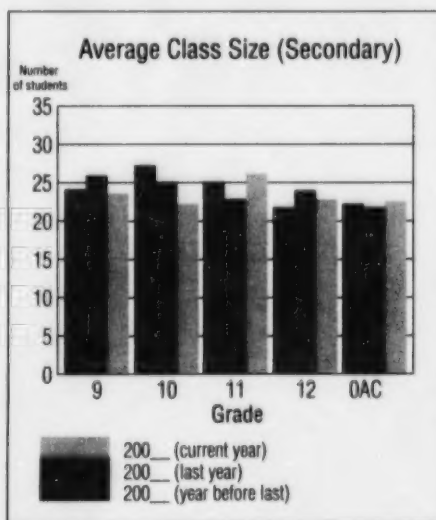
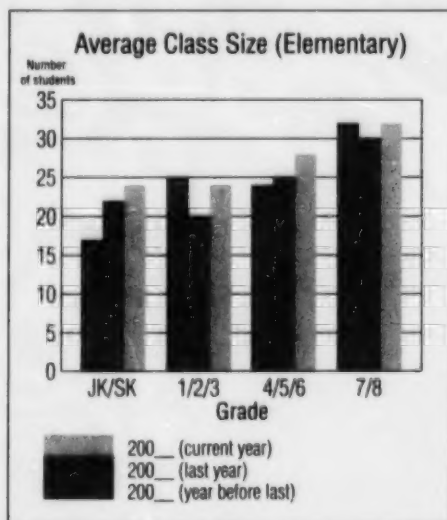
n/a = not applicable

CLASS SIZES

For the current year, use a chart or graph to report the number of students in each grade in every class in the school.

For each grade or group of grades, graphically report average class sizes for the current year and the last two years (see example).

Comment on any significant trends or features related to class size.



PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Describe the ways in which parents are involved in the school (e.g., school council, other parent groups, volunteering).

Comment on any significant features of parental involvement.

* All tables and graphs in this sample school profile are examples for illustration only. Other ways of displaying the data may also be appropriate.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Describe the school's involvement with its community partners such as social agencies (e.g., public health agencies, speech and language services); community services (e.g., libraries, parks and recreation); colleges and universities; and business and industry partners.

Comment on any significant features of these relationships.

COMMUNITY USE OF SCHOOL

Describe how the school is used by the community outside school hours, and comment on any significant features.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Add any other significant comments, graphics, or statistics not included in other parts of the school profile.

5. The Road Ahead

In this chapter, we discuss some strategies for ensuring the ongoing improvement of education in Ontario.

What Do Effective School Boards Have in Common?

Over the last year, the EIC has had a unique opportunity to look closely at the operations of every school board in the province. Our review teams have spoken to trustees; senior staff and other staff; representatives of unions, federations, and associations; students; parents; and other community members. While our reviews did not cover all areas of board responsibility, they addressed six key areas of board operations in a consistent, focused, and thorough way. Through our reviews and other consultations, we have developed a very clear understanding of the current operations of Ontario's school boards.

In particular, we have formed a clear perspective on what makes boards effective. In some of the boards we visited, all members of the education community praised the achievements of the board and its staff. In other boards, almost all the review participants expressed frustration. What makes the difference? Our reviews tell us that effective boards:

- develop vision and mission statements, which they use to guide the establishment of policies
- set goals for student achievement, and work toward realizing these goals
- allocate resources in ways that support student learning
- set in place structures to ensure fiscal responsibility
- encourage input from all education partners, and ensure that this input has an impact on policy development and other decision-making processes
- have excellent political and administrative leadership
- regularly monitor progress in meeting goals
- ensure that progress is communicated to all education partners in a clear, consistent, and timely way.

There is a striking variation in the quality of boards' communications strategies. Some boards have excellent communications policies and practices, while many acknowledge that they struggle in this area. Equally, boards vary widely in their commitment to ensuring that all members of the education community have meaningful input into their deliberations. Without question, the boards that are perceived as successfully serving their communities are those that have excellent communications and that consistently seek diverse input. These boards also provide feedback to their communities on how their input has been taken into account in the board's decision-making process.

We believe that schools, boards, school councils, and the provincial government can all learn from this conclusion, and that there is room for improved communication and inclusiveness at all levels of the education system.

The review provided an external and objective set of eyes to complement internal reflections. We are already implementing the recommendations and celebrating our successes!

—John Horgan, Minister of Education

How Can We Ensure That Improvement Continues?

We believe considerable work remains to be done to improve the effectiveness of publicly funded education. This task should be approached more cooperatively than in the past, and should include all partners in the education system: board and school administration, staff, students, parents, and other members of the community. In this section, we outline the work that still needs to be done, and present collaborative ways in which it can be accomplished.

Increasing Accountability

In the previous chapter, we outlined a comprehensive accountability framework for Ontario's education system, and made a series of recommendations for the Minister to consider. We proposed that:

- all schools and boards publish report cards and profiles, the formats of which are consistent across the province
- schools and boards develop and publish annual improvement plans
- a similar report card, profile, and improvement plan be published for the province as a whole
- an independent review of school boards be undertaken on a three- or five-year cycle, with each board being reviewed once in this period.

We reiterate that we believe the establishment of such a framework is key to the ongoing improvement of the education system.

Redirecting Funds to the Classroom

In our reviews of school boards, we commented extensively on boards' strategies for directing as much money as possible to the classroom. While a great deal has been accomplished in this area, greater savings could be made if boards cooperated more in transportation, purchasing, facilities, and numerous other areas of operation. We believe boards must move ahead with plans to share more services so they can apply more of their budgets to classroom instruction.

The Ministry of Education stimulated considerable cooperation among boards, particularly in the area of information technology, through the targeted direction of restructuring funds (*restructuring funds* were one-time funds provided in 1998 to help boards implement special projects in areas such as human resources, finance, information technology, and the development of consortia). An example is the impressive degree of cooperation among the 12 French-language boards. Additionally, impressive cooperation exists between school boards and other partners, both private and public.

Nonetheless, boards should share more services. Cooperation could increase in such areas as transportation, payroll, and purchasing without infringing on the

constitutional rights of boards or their employees or students. We note, for example, that while many boards operate purchasing cooperatives, this arrangement has rarely led to the establishment of a joint purchasing department serving two or more boards. Boards that do operate joint purchasing departments say the system works well and cuts their purchasing costs. It also reduces the costs of salaries, because combined purchasing departments require fewer staff than are needed in separate departments.

We encourage the Ministry of Education to develop strategies to encourage cooperation among boards. For example, the establishment of a searchable province-wide database of board policies would help boards to cooperate in their ongoing task of policy development.

The ministry should also develop processes that enable boards to learn from research and work done by other boards in Ontario, as well as by boards in other jurisdictions. Lew Platt, CEO of Hewlett Packard, is reported to have once said, "I wish we knew what we know at HP." By this he meant that within the organization is a largely untapped store of knowledge and excellent practice that, if drawn upon, could substantially reduce costs and improve performance. The same is true of school boards: costs would fall and performance would improve if many more boards adopted the province's most successful practices.

I would recommend that a network be established to share boards' most practices.

We believe our document *Best of Effective Practices* is a first step in this direction. However, our report is limited to those aspects of board operations that fell within the scope of our progress review. Moreover, to be useful on an ongoing basis, a tool for sharing effective practices must be a "living document," with regular updates. In addition, such a tool should serve to encourage dialogue among boards, and should be in the shared ownership of all educational partners. **The EIC intends to take the lead in encouraging cooperation in the area of purchasing. In partnership with boards and other organizations, we will study ways in which boards could reduce purchasing costs. The results of this study will be published later this year.**

Recommendation 12

That the Ministry of Education:

- a) **work with boards and provincial associations to develop and maintain mechanisms through which boards can identify and share effective practices; and**
- b) **develop a process that will lead to greater cooperation and sharing of services among school boards, so boards can redirect more money to the classroom.**

Improving Communications

In our discussions with staff, students, parents, and the broader community, we heard many times that school boards need to improve their communication with these groups. We also heard a clear demand from all groups that they be given a more meaningful role in board decision making and policy development. These groups do not want to make decisions for the board, but they do want to be heard, and to be consulted on major board decisions.

It is gratifying to see the deep interest of board staff, students, parents, and other community members in decisions that affect their schools, their community, and their province. We view their concern about boards' communication practices as a very positive sign.

Some of the boards we visited in our progress review have exemplary communications practices, and community members had only positive comments about the quality and timeliness of board communications. Other boards go to great lengths to include all partners in their decisions, and community members praised their board's efforts to share its power. Not surprisingly, these two sets of practices are often found in the same board: boards that have the most inclusive decision-making processes also have the most open and effective communications practices.

We are encouraged, therefore, that while these two areas of board operations need a great deal of work, excellent examples exist across the province to provide direction.

Recommendation 13

That school boards seek ways to improve communication among boards, schools, staff, students, parents, and other partners; and that they develop more inclusive practices to involve all partners in the development of policies and in other school and board decisions.

On May 29 and 30, 2000, the EIC, in conjunction with Queen's University, will sponsor the conference *Shifting the Balance: Shared Decision Making in School Boards*. The aim of the conference, which will take place in

Toronto, is to help boards improve communication and increase parental and community involvement in education. We intend to invite trustees, board staff, union representatives, students, parents, and other community members to a discussion with experts in these two fields and with representatives of boards that have developed some of the best practices in the province. We also hope the conference will encourage greater sharing of the many excellent practices found in our school boards.

Who...

Does What...

Accountable to...

For...

At the provincial level

Ministry of Education

- articulates vision of education for Ontario
- sets province-wide direction, including what students will know at each grade level
- provides sufficient and equitable funding to school boards

- the people of Ontario

- excellence in student achievement
- effective and efficient use of public funding allocated for education

Education Quality and Accountability Office

- measures and communicates the achievements of students, schools, and school boards

- the people of Ontario, through its board of directors

- effective monitoring and reporting of student achievement and indicators

Ontario College of Teachers

- establishes and implements standards for certification, teaching practice, and professional development
- accredits faculties of education

- the people of Ontario, through its governing council

- ensuring excellence in the teaching profession in Ontario

At the school board level

Trustees

- articulate board's vision for education
- develop policies based on vision and provincial policy
- set budgets and goals; monitor policy and student achievement
- provide equity of program for all students throughout board

- the people of their community
- the people of Ontario (through the Ministry of Education)

- excellence in student achievement
- effective and efficient use of allocated funding

Directors of education

- implement board policies
- hold schools accountable for the achievement of students
- provide support and direction to schools
- manage school board organization

- the board of trustees

- achievement of goals set by board and ministry

At the local school community level

School principals

- act as educational leaders
- lead and manage schools
- ensure effective programs are in place

- the director of education

- academic achievements of their students
- implementing board policies in their schools

School councils

- at present, advise their school principal and, if requested, their school board

- local school community

- advice that reflects community

The review was very valuable, but I would have liked more time to listen to the team members and to express my views in greater detail

Cochabamba student-grade school council, Cochabamba, Bolivia



Clarifying Roles

Education in Ontario is a partnership between the province, the school board, and the school. We believe strongly in the importance of this partnership. In our report *The Road Ahead - II*, we noted the many changes that have occurred in the roles and responsibilities of the various partners, and pointed out the need for clarity about these new roles and responsibilities.

In our progress review of school boards, we learned that, above all, much work still needs to be done to clarify the roles of school councils and principals.

School council representatives told us that there is still a considerable lack of understanding about their role, both among school council members and among the education community as a whole. We discussed this topic in detail in *The Road Ahead - III*, and made 43 recommendations that we strongly believe would strengthen and clarify the role of school councils. The acceptance of school councils and their role varies enormously across the province, and a clear statement of support, in the form of legislation or regulation that clarifies and describes their role, is long overdue.

Recommendation 14

That the Ministry of Education act on the recommendations of the EIC concerning school councils, as outlined in *The Road Ahead - III*.

The role of the principal is changing significantly. For instance, principals are no longer members of teacher federations. More significantly, they work in boards with fewer central administrative staff and supervisory officers. As a result, in some jurisdictions, boards have delegated responsibilities to principals, giving them much more autonomy in school-based decision making. In other boards, reduced central administration has had the opposite effect, leading to more centralized decision making without the traditional input by principals.

In many boards, principals are torn between their responsibility to their schools and their wish to play a system-wide leadership role, which is taking them away from their schools more often than they would like. Principals are in a difficult position, and a province-wide review of their role is needed. The foremost responsibility of the principal is to be the educational leader of his or her school. This role must be protected, while at the same time it should be recognized that principals want to, and should, provide board-wide advice and leadership.

Recommendation 15

That the Ministry of Education initiate a province-wide consultation on the role of the principal, involving the ministry, provincial principals' councils, trustees through their associations, supervisory officers and directors through their associations, parents, and senior students.

The review made us step back and evaluate what we had achieved. The result allowed us to focus on the future.

*David Northcutt
Chairman*

6. Conclusion and Summary of Recommendations

This report summarizes the observations we made during our progress review of Ontario's 72 new district school boards. While boards have made good progress, the restructuring process is not yet complete. We believe restructuring is a process that takes time, and that a period of stability is now needed to consolidate the gains that have been made.

In our view, the development and implementation of a comprehensive accountability framework is the single factor that would have the greatest impact in improving our education system and student achievement. The accountability process must focus on the improvement of student achievement. All the feedback we have received supports an ongoing, cyclical process of school board reviews, similar to the reviews we recently completed, as a fundamental component of the accountability process.

In this report, we have outlined what we believe a comprehensive accountability framework should include: have suggested formats for school and board profiles and report cards; and have made 15 recommendations for consideration by the Minister of Education, the Ministry of Education, and school boards.

In our reviews we were impressed with the dedication of trustees, administration, principals, teachers, support staff, and other members of the education community to providing high quality educational programs to our students. Our reviews supported our belief in the important role of school boards in meeting the educational needs of their students and communities.

We thank all the participants in our progress review for their cooperation. Their preparation, support of the process, and willingness to share ideas and suggestions made this project a success.

Recommendation 1: That the Minister of Education continue to work within the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada to ensure that accurate and relevant information concerning student performance and education funding be made available on a province-by-province basis, and to ensure that this data permits valid comparisons of student performance and per-pupil expenditures of different provinces and international jurisdictions.

Recommendation 2: That the Ministry of Education anticipate in the 2000-2001 funding formula the need for an appropriate increase in the compensation levels of

school board employees; and that boards and employee groups recognize their responsibility to ensure that our education system operates effectively, and that students have full access to instructional and extracurricular programs.

Recommendation 3: That the Ministry of Education develop and implement a comprehensive accountability framework for the publicly funded education sector no later than the 2001-2002 school year, and that the framework focus on a commitment to the ongoing improvement of student performance, standards of professional practice, the effectiveness of school boards and their allocation of available funding, and the adequacy of funding and other support from the Ministry of Education.

Recommendation 4: That the Minister of Education empower an independent agency to conduct reviews of school boards, focused on the question, "How successful is this board in promoting a high level of student achievement"; and that an appropriate budget be provided to the agency to conduct the reviews.

Recommendation 5: That the Ministry of Education collect examples currently in use in the province of excellent *report cards* that report on school and board



performance, to aid the development of a standard report card for all schools and boards in Ontario; that the ministry require (1) all principals, in consultation with their school councils, and (2) all school boards, through their directors of education, to publish and distribute annual report cards that report on the performance of their students; that the report cards include consistent data on the following:

- student achievement, including the results of Education Quality and Accountability Office tests, board-administered tests, and any national or international tests
- student attendance
- graduation rates of secondary students
- student destinations after graduation
- gender differences and other differences in achievement
- school safety
- any other relevant areas;

and that the report card provide adequate space for the reporting of progress in locally determined priorities.

Recommendation 6: That a verification process be developed to assure the public of the accuracy of school and board report cards.

Recommendation 7: That the Ministry of Education collect and publish examples of excellent school and board *improvement plans* currently in use in the province, to help school boards to develop their own improvement plans; that the ministry require (1) all principals, in consultation with their school councils, and (2) all school boards, through their directors of education, to develop and monitor annual improvement plans; and that the plans:

- be publicly available documents
- be based on the analysis of school and board report cards
- reflect the academic and other expectations established by the ministry and the boards
- be informed by the improvement goals of their boards and *vice versa*
- include a formal process for monitoring and reporting progress toward improvement goals.

Recommendation 8: That the Education Quality and Accountability Office publish an annual *provincial report card* that includes a provincial summary of the data published in individual school and board report cards; and that the focus of this report be information about student performance.

Recommendation 9: That the Ministry of Education develop and publish an annual *provincial improvement plan* that outlines its role in helping boards make improvements at the local level; and that this plan be based on an analysis of the provincial report card published annually by the Education Quality and Accountability Office.

Recommendation 10: That the Ministry of Education require all principals, in consultation with their school councils, and all school boards, through their directors of education, to publish *school and board profiles*; that the profiles contain contextual information to help parents and others interpret school and board report cards; that the ministry define what types of contextual data should be common to all profiles; and that the ministry collect and publish examples of excellent profiles currently in use in the province, to help schools and boards design their own profiles.

Recommendation 11: That the Ministry of Education, in consultation with the Education Quality and Accountability Office and school boards, develop an information technology plan to support the development of consistent and accurate school, board, and ministry report cards and profiles; that the plan be based on the goal of implementing standard report cards and profiles by the 2002-2003 school year; that the plan provide for appropriate support and funding to school boards and the EQAO; and that the plan contain standard definitions of data to be used by the ministry, schools, and boards in developing report cards and profiles.

Recommendation 12: That the Ministry of Education:

- a) work with boards and provincial associations to develop and maintain mechanisms through which boards can identify and share effective practices; and
- b) develop a process that will lead to greater cooperation among school boards, so boards can redirect more money to the classroom.

Recommendation 13: That school boards seek ways to improve communication among boards, schools, staff, students, parents, and other partners; and that they develop more inclusive practices to involve all partners in the development of policies and in other school and board decisions.

Recommendation 14: That the Ministry of Education act on the recommendations of the EIC concerning school councils, as outlined in *The Road Ahead - III*.

Recommendation 15: That the Ministry of Education initiate a province-wide consultation on the role of the principal, involving the ministry, provincial principals' councils, trustees through their associations, supervisory officers and directors through their associations, parents, and senior students.

Appendix A: Changes in the Number of Supervisory Officers (SOs) Employed by Boards*

Board	1997 ¹			Current		
	Number of SOs	Number of students as of Sept. 1997	Ratio of SOs to students ²	Number of SOs	Number of students as of Oct. 1998 ³	Ratio of SOs to students ²
Algoma	11.5	15,788	1:1,662	5.5	15,479	1:4,423
Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic	6	13,250	1:3,313	6	12,423	1:3,106
Avon Maitland	7	20,384	1:4,077	6	20,288	1:5,072
Bluewater	11	25,675	1:2,853	10	24,425	1:3,053
Brant/Haldimand- Norfolk Catholic	4	8,894	1:4,447	5	9,157	1:3,052
Bruce-Grey Catholic	4	4,377	1:2,189	2	4,297	**
Catholic DSB of Eastern Ontario	10	12,609	1:1,576	4	13,475	1:6,738
Catholique des Aurores boréales	1.5	570	**	1	564	**
Catholique du Centre-Est de l'Ontario	9	15,331	1:2,190	6	15,526	1:3,882
Catholique Centre-Sud	10	9,696	1:1,212	4	10,022	1:5,011
Catholique de l'Est ontarien	data unavailable	14,818	**	5	14,179	1:4,726

¹ 1997* data reflects totals of predecessor boards and sections.

² Formula is (number of supervisory officers minus 2) : (elementary plus secondary enrolment).

³ Enrolment numbers for October 1998 reflect the reductions that occurred when students transferred to the newly created French-language boards.

* Incorporating data from board reports published to January 2000

** Ratios for these boards cannot be calculated because of the small number of supervisory officers.

Board	1997 ¹			Current		
	Number of SOs	Number of students as of Sept. 1997	Ratio of SOs to students ²	Number of SOs	Number of students as of Oct. 1998 ³	Ratio of SOs to students ²
Catholique Franco-Nord	2	3,120	**	3	4,022	1:4,022
Catholique des Grandes Rivières	11	10,951	1:1,217	6	10,529	1:2,632
Catholique du Nouvel-Ontario	9	9,805	1:1,401	5	9,251	1:3,084
Centre Sud-Ouest	7	5,417	1:1,083	4	5,736	1:2,868
Dufferin-Peel Catholic	15	74,761	1:5,751	14	74,730	1:6,228
Durham	11	58,218	1:6,469	11	61,886	1:6,876
Durham Catholic	9	23,691	1:3,384	8	24,233	1:4,039
Écoles catholiques du Sud-Ouest	7	6,313	1:1,263	5	6,248	1:2,083
CSD 59 (Est de l'Ontario)	4	7,995	1:3,998	3	8,340	1:8,340
Grand Erie	13	32,379	1:2,944	9	32,005	1:4,572
Grand Nord de l'Ontario	3	2,465	1:2,465	2	2,526	**
Greater Essex County	13	36,137	1:3,285	9	35,683	1:5,098
Halton	8	41,511	1:6,919	9	41,577	1:5,940
Halton Catholic	7	20,258	1:4,052	7	20,823	1:4,165
Hamilton-Wentworth	16	55,968	1:3,998	12	55,977	1:5,598
Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic	7	25,987	1:5,197	7	26,787	1:5,357
Hastings and Prince Edward	9	20,879	1:2,983	7	20,610	1:4,122
Huron Perth Catholic	4	4,750	1:2,375	4	4,796	1:2,398
Huron-Superior Catholic	7	7,426	1:1,485	3	7,338	1:7,338
Kawartha Pine Ridge	13	40,442	1:3,677	10	40,641	1:5,080
Keewatin-Patricia	7	7,750	1:1,550	5	7,614	1:2,538
Kenora Catholic	1	1,090	**	1	1,097	**
Lakehead	6	15,398	1:3,850	5	15,002	1:5,001
Lambton Kent	10	31,174	1:3,897	8	30,265	1:5,044
Limestone	6	23,413	1:5,853	6	23,249	1:5,812

1997¹

Current

Board	Number of SOs	Number of students as of Sept. 1997	Ratio of SOs to students ²	Number of SOs	Number of students as of Oct. 1998 ³	Ratio of SOs to students ²
DSB 38 (London Catholic)	14	20,979	1:1,748	7	21,069	1:4,214
Near North	9	14,845	1:2,121	7	14,673	1:2,935
Niagara	13	44,268	1:4,024	11	44,993	1:4,999
Niagara Catholic	9	22,608	1:3,230	6	23,368	1:5,842
Nipissing-Parry Sound Catholic	3	4,246	1:4,246	2.5	3,898	**
Nord-Est de l'Ontario	1	1,011	**	1	964	**
Northeastern Catholic	2	3,635	**	2	3,112	**
Northwest Catholic	3	1,382	1:1,382	1	1,385	**
Ontario North East	10	11,757	1:1,470	5	11,308	1:3,769
Ottawa-Carleton	15	70,537	1:5,426	12	73,008	1:7,301
Ottawa-Carleton Catholic	15	34,797	1:2,677	10	35,687	1:4,461
Peel	21	98,420	1:5,180	18	100,937	1:6,309
Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington Catholic	4	11,779	1:5,890	4	12,625	1:6,313
Rainbow	11	20,250	1:2,250	5	17,887	1:5,962
Rainy River	3	3,565	1:3,565	2	3,543	**
Renfrew County	7	12,696	1:2,539	4	12,521	1:6,261
Renfrew County Catholic	4	5,797	1:2,899	3	5,206	1:5,206
Simcoe County	11	49,158	1:5,462	10	53,158	1:6,645
Simcoe Muskoka Catholic	6	18,201	1:4,550	7	18,380	1:3,676
St. Clair Catholic	9	12,943	1:1,849	6	12,871	1:3,218
Sudbury Catholic	4	7,890	1:3,945	5	7,929	1:2,643
Superior-Greenstone	4	3,716	1:1,858	3	3,556	1:3,556
Superior North Catholic	1	1,363	**	1	985	**
Thames Valley	21	81,389	1:4,284	16	81,800	1:5,843
Thunder Bay Catholic	5	8,093	1:2,698	4	8,042	1:4,021
Toronto	98	271,522	1:2,828	46	273,252	1:6,210

Board	1997 ¹			Current		
	Number of SOs	Number of students as of Sept. 1997	Ratio of SOs to students ²	Number of SOs	Number of students as of Oct. 1998 ³	Ratio of SOs to students ²
Toronto Catholic	21	97,349	1:5,124	20	96,642	1:5,369
Trillium Lakelands	11	20,877	1:2,320	6	20,162	1:5,041
Upper Canada	15	37,435	1:2,880	10	37,355	1:4,669
Upper Grand	11	32,061	1:3,562	7	33,831	1:6,766
Waterloo Catholic	10	22,279	1:2,785	7	22,134	1:4,427
Waterloo Region	12	57,063	1:5,706	12	56,937	1:5,694
Wellington Catholic	5	6,864	1:2,288	2	7,027	**
Windsor-Essex Catholic	9	26,385	1:3,769	7	26,521	1:5,304
York Catholic	13	39,948	1:3,632	10	41,547	1:5,193
York Region	18	76,741	1:4,796	18	80,938	1:5,059

Appendix B: Summary of Recommendations from the EIC's Interim Reports*

Recommendations from the Second Interim Report (September 1999)

Recommendation 1: That the Ministry of Education direct all school boards to limit their private deliberations to those subjects described in section 207(2) of the *Education Act*.

Recommendation 2: That the Ministry of Education, in consultation with relevant partners, develop clear expectations for the role of principals and vice-principals.

Recommendation 3: That the Ministry of Education take whatever steps are necessary to ensure that all boards report their financial expenditures in a comparable and consistent manner.

Recommendation 4: That the Government of Ontario establish a panel with broad representation to:

- a) develop a common vision for the use of new technologies that supports the public and private sectors across the province, and
- b) develop recommendations for the implementation of this vision.

Recommendation 5: That the Ministry of Education review the interrelated legislation that affects how boards operate within the pupil accommodation funding formula.

Recommendation 6: That the Ministry of Education develop a process and a funding mechanism to encourage district school boards to form regional consortia for transportation services.

Recommendation 7: That the Ministry of Education:

- a) establish a program review process to assist boards in evaluating their identification and program delivery models for students with special needs, and
- b) establish student achievement standards for students with special needs.

Recommendation 8: That the Ministry of Education review aspects of the education funding formula to examine the following:

- a) the pupil accommodation formula as it relates to the renewal of school facilities, the capacity calculations for new pupil place grants in widespread jurisdictions, the provision for expenditures for extraordinary emergencies, and the timing of new pupil place grants
- b) the design and adequacy of the formula for special education
- c) the adequacy of the small school factor in meeting the needs of boards with many small, isolated schools, and
- d) the adequacy of board administration funding for very small boards.

* There were no recommendations in the *First Interim Report*

Recommendations from the *Third Interim Report (January 2000)*

Recommendation 1: That school boards develop processes that lead to the election of student trustees by their peers and that support the inclusion of student opinion in board deliberations.

Recommendation 2: That the Ministry of Education review the needs of French-language boards and the resources available to them to ensure that the costs of providing materials and services in a minority-language setting are adequately recognized.

Recommendation 3: That the Ministry of Education re-examine the English-as-a-second-language grant, particularly the factors used to determine need and level of support.

Recommendation 4: That the Ministry of Education enrich the learning opportunities grant, and re-examine the factors used to determine need and level of support under this grant.

Recommendation 5: That the Ministry of Education:

- a) take a lead role in developing high-quality programs that have as their goal the success of First Nations students in the province's schools, and
- b) re-examine the adequacy and design of those sections of the funding formula that support the needs of First Nations students attending district school boards whose education is not supported by tuition agreements.

Recommendation 6: That the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Finance take appropriate steps to ensure that municipalities transfer boards' share of tax revenue to the boards on a monthly basis.

Recommendation 7: That the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Finance work with boards in northern Ontario to find an efficient and cost-effective way to levy and collect education taxes in unorganized territories and distribute them to the boards that are entitled to receive them.

Recommendation 8: That the Ministry of Education work collaboratively with boards that collect taxes from a large number of municipalities to ensure that these boards receive their share of municipal taxes on a monthly basis.

Recommendation 9: That the Ontario College of Teachers, the Ministry of Education, the province's faculties of education, and representatives of district school boards work together to develop and publicly report on strategies to ensure that Ontario's schools are staffed with appropriately qualified teachers.